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## Kennedy on Latin Reform

Senator Robert Kennedy urges the obvious in declaring that the United States should favor social and economic reform—"peaceful revolution," if you will—in Latin America. Aid for entrenched oligarchies that pay only lip service to land redistribution, education, public health and the other basic needs of most Latin nations can indeed delay rather than further social progress.

The senator's solution for this dilemma does not follow as easily as he makes it appear, however. He would have Washington withhold material and moral support from any and all Latin American countries whose governments resist needed reform. He would have America associate itself "with the forces of reform and social justice."

It sounds like a blueprint for the very kind of intervention that Mr. Kennedy and his fellow liberals would be the first to condemn, if advocated or practiced by the Central Intelligence Agency, for ex-

ample. How does the American ambassador make friends with an incipient rebellion, however well motivated and led, while he is accredited to the government in power? If he is able, he does, of course, try to keep in touch with the main currents of thought and political action. But overt acts aimed at diverting U. S. support from a government to its enemies are pretty risky enterprises, as likely to backfire as to succeed.

Still, the senator has a point. "Intervention," by whatever name, is inevitable, given American military, commercial and other interests in the hemisphere. Good diplomatic form need not hamstring policy completely. If the touch is light and sure, the "good guys" can be helped and the "bad guys" shorted. But it is not a policy that can be proclaimed on the hour from the rooftops, or from the well of the Senate. For we still must deal with the world as it is, not as we wish it to be.